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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 1920

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THE EVOLUTION OF BOTANICAL RESEARCH¹

A MEETING of the American Association in St. Louis is of special interest to botanists. When this city was little more than a frontier town, Dr. George Englemann became one of its citizens. In spite of his duties as a successful physician, he became one of our greatest botanists. In fact, in the days when taxonomy was practically the whole of botany, and our virgin flora was being explored, the great American trio of botanists was Asa Gray, of Cambridge, John Torrey, of New York, and George Englemann, of St. Louis. Englemann's distinction was that he published no general botanical works, but selected a series of the most difficult problems in taxonomy, and in a masterly way organized for us many perplexing groups. With these groups his name will always be associated. To a botanist, therefore, St. Louis means the home of George Englemann.

There is another association also for the botanist. St. Louis is the home of one of our great botanical gardens, identified for those of us who are older with the name of Henry Shaw; but we are becoming accustomed to its later name, the Missouri Botanical Garden. Its plans and activities represent a fitting continuation of the spirit of Englemann and Shaw, adapted to the progress of botanical science.

In consequence of these associations, St. Louis may be said to have a botanical atmosphere, of which botanists are very conscious. We have the feeling, therefore, not of a visit, but of a home-coming.

A presidential address, delivered to a group composed of investigators representing all the sciences, and including also those interested

¹ Address of the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, St. Louis, December, 1919.